My dear Tom Rome 22 oct 1870

I know how acceptable to you a letter of mine is & I have a leisure moment so I'll spend an hour with you. — First I am glad to assure you of my well being in the midst of such fearful doings, indeed of my good health for I was sadly afraid of my nerves being affected & indeed I had enough to do so, no less than a reproof from the P.O. — When the siege was approaching I was asked by one of the Papal ministers to try & mediate & stop the bloodshed & this I was willing to do if there had been any thing to propose, but the Pope would not give way in disbanding his foreign troops according to the King's letter & so nothing could be done the walls had been put into defensive trim & so the Pope was determined to stand out, but the walls & Zouaves failed & there was nothing left but a miracle & that failed too

It seems that I was wrong to accept the office of mediator for this only belongs to a diplomat appointed by the P.O. & so I got into a mess altho I did not actually act. This I owe

to an ill tempered man who is here from the Embassy - he spitefully sent copies of my letters to L.d G. - but I was able to defend myself as I had not acted in any way - My office was to try & induce the Pope to disband his Zouaves who had conducted themselves with great arrogance to the Roman people & also I had received a grave insult. The Minister considered that I should succeed & prevent a conflict between the troops & people who were then conspiring to open a gate to the liberating army - I did not feel confident & consulted Viscount Jervoise - he said I was wrong to even think of such a thing & sent a telegram to L.d G against me so in due time I got a trimming — Just now I am preparing two important despatches one to our Florence Ambassador the other to the King of Italy on the subject of my 7 years Italian Consulate with the great services I have performed & what I look forward to as reward in due course - What shall I get? for I cannot accept a title of any kind, our Govt won't allow it.!! will it be a pension? or will it be money - or shall I get any thing? My chief Secretary leaves me as the Consulate is done in Rome being united to Italy - he has been a faithfull & devoted Sec.y - a gentleman of fine education & great uprightness - he has been of the greatest service to me - for I know nothing, yet I'd great imagination & he worked out my Consular

I'll keep this to tell you as to what the King does for me — I am now carefully reckoning how much I have left after loosing half my sal — but my wants are few & my children all gone & so I've no expence but in cabs when I lose my legs, that is I go out to a nice place to walk for 2 or 3 hours & cab it home it costs 8d within any part of the city — Also I am getting stout which I regret & my cloaths regret also — The English have not yet come, except young Mr Ellis who is a sharpe — I know his father — his grandfather & his great grandfather who lived in Myrtle St. Hoxton now & then a generation slips thro' my fingers — The new government — General Masi wanted to know my age as I had been 5 Popes but I did not let on

1st Nov — The Minister at Florence has written me a beautiful letter & that he wished to present me a "decoration" but he fears my good will not allow me to accept it — I answer "let him try it" Still the English Ambassador has to make my appeal to the King — but nothing will come of it. The excessive business has disturbed my sleep & I am a little weak in walking, but get "bobbish" considering — Now I hope you are imitating me by also picking up — Every one trembles at the scrubbing brush (made of stiff coarse grass) which I use every morn & scrub myself all over, 'tis even pleasant & I could not go without it — it may have had to do with my recovery — but it has never taken the skin off yet, !! — I very anxious about you & hope Maria will be able to give me a good account soon

a comfort

I hope to hear a good account of poor
dear Tom — a friend of his Mr Howitt
the Artist enquired most kindly after him
the other day

10th. You will be amused that a gentleman has
just now enquired about my Father, when he
died, what age he was & what he would always
be famous in English history, when I discovered he
took me for my son & would hardly believe
that I was the artist friend of Shelley & Keats

Now this carrying my years so well is much
in my favour — but as it is known that 50 years
have passed since I first came to Rome, so I am
sure they [illegible] me out, but I begin to be a
wonder to all, for as yet I have not a wrinkle
& they tell me I am as fresh as a rose — I tell
you all this to console you for the bad news — how
odd it will be when I am pensioned off, but then
I hope to do nothing but paint, shall I be like
Titian who was painting at 99!! — But the Arts
have gone down sadly since my time & I cannot
have much hopes of selling my pictures — But if
I have strength of hand & sight to do them I will
not complain — these I have my sight is excellent
& my hearing good, but I am very idle after such